

PPM 566

OCCUPATIONAL TOOLS & EQUIPMENT

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GENERAL INFORMATION

566.01 PURPOSE OF OCCUPATIONAL TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT

Consistent with the vocational rehabilitation needs and informed choice of each individual and in accordance with the policies described in this chapter, occupational tools and equipment are furnished by the state

vocational rehabilitation program for the purpose of equipping an individual with the implements and apparatus required during a vocational or other training program specific to a trade or profession and subsequent entry into an employment situation.

566.02 QUALIFYING INDIVIDUALS

State vocational rehabilitation program assistance can be provided for the acquisition of occupational tools and equipment only for those individuals who are applicants receiving services under a Trial Work Experiences (TWE) or Extended Evaluation (EE) plan and eligible individuals receiving services under an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

566.03 NATURE AND SCOPE OF OCCUPATIONAL TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT

Occupational tools and equipment include:

- (1) instruments and apparatus that are—
 - (A) normally associated with and required to perform the work peculiar to a skilled trade or profession (e.g., carpenter's and mechanic's tools, PCs, etc.) and
 - (B) customarily provided by a worker;
- (2) alternative tools and equipment (such as a power skill saw in lieu of a handsaw), if necessary to accommodate an individual's specific functional needs relative to the work performed, even though the same or similar tools may be made available at a job site by an employer for the shared use of workers;
- (3) occupationally related tools and equipment required during vocational or other training preparatory to employment, if such tools and equipment will subsequently be required by the client on the job; and
- (4) related items, such as tool belts and tool chests, and initial supplies required for use of a device (such as ink cartridges for a PC and similar consumables).

CONDITIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF SERVICE PROVISION**566.04 GENERAL CONDITIONS OF SERVICE PROVISION****(1) PRIOR KNOWLEDGE AND AUTHORIZATION**

State vocational rehabilitation program assistance can only be provided for occupational tools and equipment with the full prior knowledge and authorization of the assigned Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor or another qualified professional employed by the state vocational rehabilitation program. The cost of goods and services obtained without the full prior knowledge and authorization of the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor or another qualified professional employee of the vocational rehabilitation program cannot be paid for or reimbursed by the program.

(2) WRITTEN PLAN OF SERVICES

The applicable Trial Work Experiences (TWE) or Extended Evaluation (EE) plan, or the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), must specify occupational tools and equipment as a service to be provided prior to any program assistance being authorized, and the tools and equipment must be furnished in accordance with the provisions of the plan, including any conditions and limitations noted therein.

(3) COMPARABLE SERVICES AND BENEFITS

Comparable services and benefits must be sought and utilized for the provision of occupational tools and equipment to the maximum extent to which they are available and appropriate to the individual.

(4) FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION

The individual and, as applicable, the family of the individual may be required to participate financially in meeting the costs of occupational tools and equipment, consistent with the requirements of PPM chapter 610.

(5) PRICE QUOTES

Prior to purchasing any occupational tools and equipment with a total cost of more than \$600.00 with state vocational rehabilitation funds, the client

and VR Counselor must obtain not less than two competitive price quotes for the specific items to be purchased in accordance with program policies described in PPM chapter 600.

566.05 SERVICE PROVISION LIMITATIONS

(1) DEVICES AND ITEMS OTHERWISE CLASSIFIED

Occupational tools and equipment do not include devices otherwise classified by federal or program policy, including, but not limited to:

(A) medical devices and equipment classified as physical and mental restoration services;

(B) training materials required solely for vocational or other training purposes but not subsequently utilized in employment (especially items included in the cost of attendance for postsecondary training programs);

[REQUIRED PRACTICE. Tools and equipment required for training purposes but not subsequently needed for employment are classified and purchased as training costs under books and other training materials.]

(C) items other than occupational tools and equipment classified under federal and state program policies as assistive technology devices;

(D) business-related tools and equipment required in conjunction with the establishment and start-up of a small business enterprise or other self-employment outcome; or

(E) items required to equip a Business Enterprise Program (BEP) vending site under the Randolph-Sheppard Act.

(2) TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT NOT VOCATIONALLY RELEVANT AND NECESSARY

State vocational rehabilitation program assistance is not available and cannot be authorized for the purchase of tools and equipment not required for the completion of job-related training and subsequent job performance or for tools and equipment provided by a training institution or employer.

[REQUIRED PRACTICE. The state vocational rehabilitation program is under no obligation to assist any individual with the purchase of tools or equipment beyond those minimally required for occupational training and the performance of work. Care must be taken to provide only the tools and equipment actually required for the completion of job-related training and job performance, and to avoid providing tools unneeded or seldom used, or which will be provided by training institutions and employers. A determination regarding items that are required may be based on client and Counselor contact with training facilities, prospective employers, trade unions, other trade and professional organizations, and similar reliable sources that are qualified to help determine which tools and what equipment will be required for the client's employment.]

(3) DUPLICATE TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT

State vocational rehabilitation program assistance is not available and cannot be authorized for the purchase of duplicate tools or equipment solely as a contingency against breakage or loss of use.

(4) ADDITIONAL TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT NEEDED AFTER JOB PLACEMENT

It is assumed that any tools and equipment needed by the client after job placement as he or she progresses on the job and increases in level of skill which are in addition to the tools and equipment purchased for purposes of training and initial employment will be secured by the client at his or her own expense from earned income. Additional tools and equipment can be provided subsequent to job placement or as post-employment services only when it can be demonstrated that:

(A) the additional tools and equipment are necessary for the client to continue in employment;

(B) the employer is not obligated to provide them on the same basis as tools and equipment are provided for the use of other workers, or as a work-related accommodation; and

(C) the client is unable to provide the required tools and equipment from his own income for reasons other than lack of adequate planning.

(5) MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR OF TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT

To the extent that they are not the responsibility of the training institution or employer, maintenance and repair of occupational tools and equipment are the sole responsibility of the individual, except that vocational rehabilitation program assistance may include, in the case of some equipment, the costs of a service contract or maintenance agreement, provided that the duration of any such contract or agreement purchased with program funds does not extend beyond the anticipated ending date of the individual's rehabilitation program.

(6) REPLACEMENT OF OCCUPATIONAL TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT

The replacement of occupational tools and equipment is the responsibility of the client and must be met by the client at his or her own expense from earned income, unless it is demonstrated that existing tools and equipment no longer meet the vocational rehabilitation needs of the individual because:

(A) changes in the nature or scope of the individual's physical or mental impairment have resulted in substantially different needs with respect to the tools and equipment required for training or the work performed;

(B) changes in the nature or scope of the individual's training or employment make different tools and equipment necessary for the specific purpose of training or job performance; or

(C) replacement of existing occupational tools and equipment is necessary for the client to continue in training and/or employment where—

(1) the inability to continue in training or the threat of job loss is clearly documented,

(2) the individual is unable to provide for the required replacement from his own income for reasons other than lack of adequate planning,

(3) the need for replacement has not arisen due to abuse or negligence on the part of the individual, and

- (4) the training institution or employer is not obligated to replace the required tools and equipment on the same basis as replacement tools and equipment are provided for the use of other students or workers, or as a training or work-related accommodation.

[REQUIRED PRACTICE. Individuals are reminded that occupational tools and equipment are subject to maintenance, repair, and replacement costs, and that provisions should be made in advance to meet such needs as they arise. Individuals are expected to exercise due diligence with respect to caring for occupational tools and equipment furnished with state vocational rehabilitation program assistance. The state vocational rehabilitation program has no obligation to provide ongoing maintenance for occupational tools and equipment, or to pay for the repair or replacement of tools and equipment damaged or lost due to abuse or negligence on the part of the individual. Where there is high risk of theft or other possible loss, the individual is advised to insure the tools and equipment, as appropriate.]

566.06 OWNERSHIP AND DISPOSITION OF TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT PURCHASED WITH VR PROGRAM ASSISTANCE

Tools and equipment paid for in whole by the state vocational rehabilitation program remain the property of the program until successful closure of the individual's case record as rehabilitated and transfer of the tools and equipment to the individual is completed, and may be reclaimed prior to that time by the program in accordance with applicable program policies. Tools and equipment paid for in whole or in part by the individual or the family of the individual become the property of the individual upon receipt. The individual or the individual's representative must complete a Receipt for Client Goods form acknowledging receipt of any tools and equipment purchased with program assistance costing more than \$50. At the time that ownership is transferred, the transfer must be appropriately acknowledged in writing in the individual's record of services.

RECORD OF SERVICES DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

566.07 REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

If occupational tools and equipment have been provided for an individual, the record of services must minimally include:

- (1) documentation showing that the individual was an applicant receiving services under a Trial Work Experiences (TWE) or Extended Evaluation

(EE) plan or an eligible individual receiving services under an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) at the time of service provision;

(2) the written plan (TWE, EE, or IPE) effective at the time of service provision, identifying occupational tools and equipment as a service to be provided;

(3) identification of the basis on which a determination of which tools and what equipment were occupationally relevant and necessary was made;

(4) documentation sufficient to demonstrate that all fiscal policy requirements with respect to prior authorization, consideration of comparable services and benefits, client financial participation, price quotes, billing, and vouchering have been met;

(5) if required by policy, a Receipt for Client Goods form signed and dated by the individual for all tools and equipment received;

(6) as applicable, written notification of the transfer of ownership or reclamation of the tools and equipment provided.

566.08 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SYSTEM COMPLIANCE

All required information, data, and documents must be incorporated and maintained in the record of services for the individual in a manner consistent with Indiana Rehabilitation Information System (IRIS) requirements.

[AUTHORITY: Federal regulations 34 CFR 361.12; 361.13(c); 361.39; 361.47; 361.48(p); 361.50; 361.52; 361.53; 361.54.]

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